

Tempe Parks & Recreation
3500 S. Rural Rd., Tempe, AZ. 85282

“ALL CITY” YOUTH SPORTS



FLAG FOOTBALL GRADES 4 & 5

**Player/Parents/Coaches
Handbook**

City of Tempe NFL Flag Football
Player/ Parents/Coaches Guide
For grades 4/5

WELCOME!

The purpose of this handbook is to inform players, parents and coaches of the “All City” Youth Flag Football Program, policies and guidelines. “Communication” is one of the keys to an enjoyable and successful season. If you have questions or comments please don’t hesitate to call a Recreation Staff member anytime before or throughout the season.

The City of Tempe Parks Recreation has a long history of coordinating recreation programs. The program philosophy has been and continues to be quite simple:

1. Participation
2. Skill Development
3. Sportsmanship
4. Friendly Competition
5. Fun Experience

The coaches are encouraged to practice the philosophy by providing the full right to play. There is a quote, “I would rather play and lose than sit on the bench and win.” Participants have clearly demonstrated that playing is more important than winning. Sitting on the bench does not meet our objectives. Studies conducted by the National Association for Youth Sports reports that when children were asked whether they would prefer to be on a winning team and sit the bench or be on a losing team and play regularly, nearly 90% of the children chose to **play and lose**. There is no question about it that children want equality of playing time

Everybody Plays: NFL Flag games were designed specifically to make it easier for every player to have a role in a team's success. While size and skill certainly will come into play when the action starts, your coaching should emphasize the "working together" aspect of the games.

PLAYERS BILL OF RIGHTS

1. The “All City” Youth Flag Football Program is for the players. It is not for administrators, coaches, or parents. The welfare of all players will be the number one consideration.

2. Each player has the right to play in at least half of every game, no matter what the degree of physical ability or the relative importance of the game in terms of competition.
3. Each player has the right to have a coach who places them first, the team second, himself/herself third, and winning fourth.
4. Each player has the right to have fun participating and to have a supportive coach who takes the time to work with each athlete, regardless of ability or potential.
5. Each player has the right to have fun participating whether he/she plays on a winning or losing team.
6. **As a parent, if you feel that your child's rights are being violated, please contact an "All City" Youth Flag Football staff person.**

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COACHES

Each and every volunteer coach working with participants in the 4th to 8th grades are required to go through the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) training. This training involves coaching philosophy, building self-esteem and confidence, teaching sportsmanship, conditioning, safety, injuries, and coaching tips. It requires that all coaches be drug, alcohol and tobacco free, while at all youth sporting events. The NYSCA certified coach is required to sign a Code of Ethics pledge to keep sports safe, fun, and a positive experience for Tempe's youth.

Tempe Parks and Recreation will conduct a background check on all volunteer coaches. This process will include fingerprinting for every volunteer.

Coaching an NFL Flag League

As a volunteer coach in the City's NFL Flag program, your main goal should be to create a fun and safe learning environment for your players. Whether you are an experienced coach or a novice taking the reins of your first team, there are several things to keep in mind as you begin your NFL Flag season.

Not all of these things are just as a NFL coach would do, but then, this isn't the NFL. However, one of the fun parts of NFL Flag is that the skills your players will practice and play with are just like those of their NFL heroes: passing, catching, defending, etc. This connection to the real-life game they see every week is one you should feel free to emphasize.

10Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Attire: Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.

Official NFL Flag jerseys must be worn during play.

Note: There are no kickoffs, and no blocking is allowed.

Tackle Tackling Early: Don't let your practices dissolve into a giant pile of rambunctious kids. For both their safety and your sanity, make sure to discourage any tackling or roughness early on. Remind them that they won't help their team in a game by tackling or being rough.

Sportsmanship Rules: Help your players be good sports. After a game, shake hands with or do a cheer for the other team. Applaud good play by both sides. Treat officials with respect. While imitating you, your team won't even know it's being taught a good lesson.

Let Them Play Football: The temptation to be another Don Shula or Bill Walsh will have to wait. This is NFL Flag. While teaching football skills and strategies is important, keep your lessons as simple as possible. As your team grasps the basics, move on to more advanced ideas. Overloading young players with too much information too early can cause them only confusion...and you headaches.

NYSCA COACHES' CODE OF ETHICS PLEDGE

I hereby pledge to live up to my certifications as an NYSCA Coach by following the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics.

- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development from the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will promise to review and practice the basics first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.

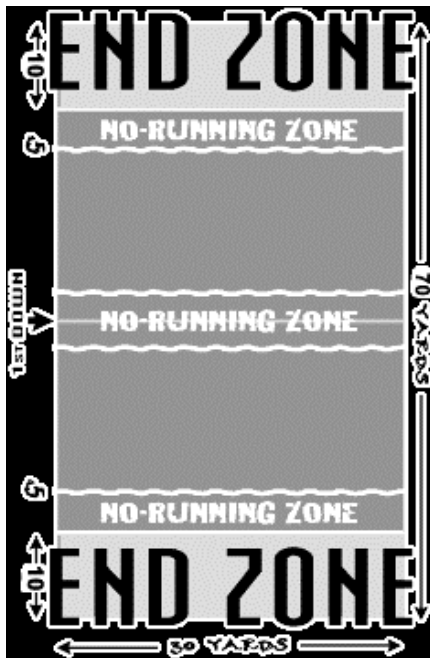
I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not the adults



For fall 2003 the City has joined with the Arizona Cardinals to participate in the NFL Flag Football Program. This program parallels the City's long standing philosophy by emphasizing basic football skills of passing, catching, defending, and running. In NFL Flag, participants also learn about formations, pass patterns, and different types of defense.

NFL Flag

This five-on-five game is more recognizable to football fans. The offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are "no-running zones" at midfield and near each goal line. The defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer, and grabs flags to make "tackles."



NFL Flag Rules

- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes, **but possession does not change** and the clock does not stop.

Players/Game Schedules

- Teams must field a minimum of five (5) players at all times.
- Teams consist of 10 players (5 on field w/ 5 substitutes).

Timing/Overtime

- Games are played to 40 minutes running time.
- If the score is tied at the end of 40 minutes, teams move directly into overtime. The first team to score wins.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time out per half.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

Scoring

- **Touchdown:** 6 points;
- **Extra point:** 1 point (played from 5-yard line) or 2 points (played from 12-yard line);
- **Safety:** 2 points

Running

The quarterback cannot run with the ball

- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- *Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.*
- “No-running zones,” located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted *where the ball carrier’s feet are* when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

- All passes must be forward and *received beyond the line of scrimmage.*
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

Dead Balls

The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play. Play is ruled “dead” when:

- Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- Touchdown or safety is scored.

- Ball carrier's flag falls out.
- At the point of an interception (interception returns are not allowed).
- Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.

Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.

Penalties: All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defense:

- Offsides -5 yards and automatic first down
- Interference - 10 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal contact (*holding, blocking, etc.*) -10 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull (*before receiver has ball*) - 10 yards and automatic first down
- Illegal rushing (*starting rush from inside 7-yard marker*) - 10 yards and automatic first down

Offense:

- Illegal motion (*more than one person moving, false start, etc*) 5 yards and loss of down
- Illegal forward pass (*pass received behind line of scrimmage*) 5 yards and loss of down
- Offensive pass interference (*illegal pick play, pushing off defender*) 10 yards and loss of down
- Flag guarding 10 yards and loss of down
- Delay of game Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

Rushing the Quarterback

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Remember, no blocking or tackling is allowed.

Sportsmanship/Roughing

- If the field supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from that night's play. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.



NFL Flag - Plays

In NFL Flag teams will work with the understanding that there are (3) basic formation calls (Split T, Twins, Trips). Variations and adjustments to the formation can be made to both. (See examples below).

